# Minority Memories

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## Border Crossings, Rites of Passage, and Liminal Experiences in Contemporary Literature

*Sara Van den Bossche and Sophie Wennerscheid (Eds.)*

# Editorial. Border Crossings, Rites of Passage, and Liminal Experiences in Contemporary Literature

Sara Van den Bossche and Sophie Wennerscheid

The special issue at hand – "Border Crossings, Rites of Passage, and Liminal Experiences in Contemporary Literature" – results from an eponymous workshop held at Ghent University in October 2016 within the framework of the U4 network.[1] The U4 partnership unites the universities of Ghent, Göttingen, Uppsala, and Groningen. Within the research cluster "Cultural Transfer Research", within which the workshop was embedded, literary scholars with a Scandinavia-oriented profile have been collaborating for many years already. In fact, the Ghent event built on two previous cluster workshops,[2] which were aimed at discussing concepts and tools in cultural transfer research and sought to examine the nature and consequences of cultural flows and transfers. The purpose of the Ghent workshop was to deepen the interest in processes of transfer and transmission by focusing on literary texts dealing with transitory situations and transformative events that can be characterised as *liminal*, viz. in between or belonging to different states. With news reports about the fate of refugees and the impact of migration policies dominating media worldwide, the idea of liminality is brought to the fore incessantly. Literary texts that highlight personal experiences of a single individual help readers to get a better understanding of both the said character's "individual fate" and the cultural and historical circumstances in which the character's life story is embedded.

Liminal or transitory phases are typical of the processes in which identities are shaped. In traditional discussions of such transformative stages, generally, emphasis is placed on the outcome of these processes. The focus is on integration or assimilation into a given social or cultural group. By contrast, the aim of the workshop and special issue is to highlight the in-between, liminal phase. Our approach deliberately shifts attention away from notions of identity *formation* or *construction* informed by teleology, that is, geared towards a fixed outcome. Therefore, it conceives of identities – in plural – as being negotiated instead of constructed, and explicitly *does*

1 As organizers of the workshop and editors of this special issue, we are grateful to *DiGeSt* for offering us a platform for developing the ideas that first emerged during said workshop.

2 The previous U4 workshops were held at the University of Groningen in 2014 and at the University of Uppsala in 2015.

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*not* posit overcoming liminality as a goal. It values the liminal phase in its own right and abandons the cyclical, closed off structure of initiation processes in favour of a dynamic, open-ended trajectory. Contemporary literature makes for a particularly good testing ground to study these dynamics because its aim is not to prove a fictional character's way of life right or wrong but to present his or her emotional ambivalences concomitant with the experience of transformation and transition.

The understanding of identity underpinning the cases presented in this issue is intersectional. By locating identity at the junction of several axes of signification (Wekker, 2016, p. 70), concerning e.g. race, ethnicity, culture, nationality, religion, age, sanity, gender, or sexuality, its multiplicity is stressed. The articles included in this special issue scrutinise literary texts that foreground liminal experiences that are non-privileged and non-central. Each of the case studies interrogates stable categories of identity that are perceived as the norm precisely by highlighting liminal, non-standardised experiences. In particular, the articles focus on the roles of intermediaries, characters who find themselves in between divergent cultural, ethnic, or social groups, and live through processes of cross-cultural initiation. One of the main questions, serving as a red thread throughout the issue, is how these liminal figures attempt to negotiate between multiple aspects of their fluid identities. These characters can be seen to withdraw from the norm, to position themselves outside of the normativity of majority standards. They choose to linger in a carnivalesque, anarchistic liminal phase, which is void of institutional control, and not to integrate into the normative centre.

Apart from being intersectional, the conception of identity informing the analyses is inherently spatial. Reflecting the spatial turn in the humanities in general, the conceptual framework adopts as a central tenet the interrelation of time and space in identity. In the cases presented in the articles, changes in the literary figures' lives (a temporal aspect) are inextricably entwined with the places in which they take place (a spatial component) (Wyse et al., 2012, p. 1020). In keeping with the intersectional paradigm, fluid identities are seen to emerge at the crossroads – meeting places (Wyse et al., 2012, p. 1020) – of multiple trajectories.

Spatiality is central in **Jeanette den Toonder**'s analysis of Chahdortt Djavann's *Comment peut-on être français?*, a key work in literature depicting post-revolutionary Iran, typically from the perspective of an exiled or immigrant female character. Starting from an understanding of migrant writing as writing in movement, Den Toonder conceives of identity not as being but as becoming. She applies to Djavann's novel the framework of migratory feminism, which denounces polarisation and foregrounds the negotiation between difference and hybridity instead, and in which fiction is considered to defy fixity. The cultural transfer in *Comment peut-on être français?* consists of the intercultural discourse between the protagonist, a young female immigrant in modern-day Paris, and the Enlightenment philosopher Montesquieu. Through the position of the cultural outsider, Djavann's and Montesquieu's narratives critique both French and Iranian society, both in the past and in the present, e.g. with respect to the silencing of women's voices. The main character is an outsider because she is lonely, and she experiences alienation from her own identity, which is magnified through the confrontation with a foreign language that she cannot seem to master. Language thus serves as a vehicle for alterity, for distinguishing between in- and exclusion. She regains contact with her own identity by allowing the other inside herself (her memories of her painful past in Iran) and by adopting a fictional identity, borrowed from Montesquieu's *Lettres persanes*.

**Jana Rüegg**'s contribution deals with cultural transfer in an institutional sense, as she compares the covers of different translations of Swedish author Sara Stridsberg's *Beckomberga: Ode till min familj*. Set in the eponymous mental institution, *Beckomberga* is a novel about the transgression of boundaries, which explores queer themes situated on the spectrums of (in)sanity, (ab)normality, and in- and exclusion. Rüegg identifies the liminal tropes in the book and studies how the different publishers interpret them and visualise them in the translation's cover. She reveals how in some versions the references to queer, non-normative aspects that the name Beckomberga denotes are downplayed, whereas other covers highlight the queer space and time that the institution and the novel's protagonist represent. The article demonstrates how the tension between normative and non-normative, central to the narrative, is captured in the covers by means of skewed lines, upside-down images, and pronounced distances between the observers and the observed.

In her contribution, **Petra Broomans** contrasts two different versions of in-betweenness related to the Sámi and Torne Valley minorities in Northern Scandinavia with one another. Both cases address the tension between minority mores and traditional practices and the majority culture's legal system that becomes apparent when a crime needs to be solved. In particular, the argumentation centres on the way in which this friction affects the sense of belonging of the female detectives investigating the homicides. Both female investigators grapple with the cultural hybridity that characterises their identity. In her analysis, Broomans combines the concept of cultural hybridity with ethnolinguistic nationalism to contextualise the responses to colonialism discernible in the texts. She reveals how, in this setting, language use serves as a mechanism of exclusion. She demonstrates how the individual on the one hand and the political and the collective on the other blend in the liminal spaces in which the female protagonists find themselves. Adopting a gender perspective, she furthermore uncovers a partiality against women on two levels. For one, the narrative perspective denies female characters access to historical, political knowledge. Secondly, personal female anguish is shown to be subordinate to collective minority traumas. Thus, the fusion of insights gained from post-colonial, feminist, and ethnolinguistic studies makes for a rich analysis.

Finally, **Sophie Wennerscheid** applies the notion of liminality to gender and sexuality. She discusses contemporary Swedish novels that challenge heteronormativity by means of characters who queer the presupposed heterosexual life journey that comes with privileges in terms of space. Some physical spaces, so the argument goes,

are not intended for gender non-normative bodies. All of the examples she examines depict figures who choose to be queer, going against the norm of heterosexual desire. Her goal is to investigate the connections between sexual and gender identity, place, and emotional belonging. Wennerscheid considers the process of becoming queer as a rite of passage. Her approach ties in with Sara Ahmed's queer phenomenological perspective, which is meant to supplement the widely acknowledged three-part structure of an initiation ritual first proposed by Arnold van Gennep in 1908. Wennerscheid uses the latter to examine the depiction of the various stages the individuals in transition live through. A central argument in her article is that the rites associated with coming out result in a non-institutionalised form of liminality, as queer gender and sexual identities tend to fall outside of socially accepted discourses on sexuality. Ranging from lesbian, to gay, genderqueer, and trans characters, the dramatis personae of the novels discussed mirrors an exploration of many conceivable gender and sexual identities. The red thread throughout the argumentation is the question how the non-normative protagonists interact with and are perceived by members of the heterosexual majority culture on the one hand and of the queer communities on the other. It turns out that in many of these novels, the stability of the post-liminal phase, proposed by Van Gennep, is questioned.

The "What are you reading?" section presents a number of short notes on relatively recent critical studies that are of particular significance to a researcher's ongoing project. Since the theoretical work of Sara Ahmed played an important role during the discussions of the above mentioned U4 workshop, and two of the articles at hand likewise draw on Ahmed's thinking, **Sara Van den Bossche** discusses Sara Ahmed's *Living a Feminist Life*, published in 2017. **Hanne Willekens**, who also participated in the workshop, contributes to the discussion by presenting the book *Pojklandet* (Boys' Land), published in 2017 by the Swedish literary scholar Magnus Öhrn. This book is particularly interesting because it combines a spatial approach to processes of identity with a strong interest in coming-of-age-processes as they are represented in Swedish children's and adult literature.

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## About the authors

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# Minority Memories:
## Lost Language, Identity, and In-betweenness in Two Crime Novels by Mikael Niemi and Lars Pettersson

Petra Broomans

**Abstract**

This paper discusses two Scandinavian crime novels, each of which contain characters who represent two different perspectives on the phenomenon of being an outsider: one protagonist who comes from "the outside" is confronted by life in the North, while another group of protagonists, in the second novel, are members of a minority community and also occupy a position as outsiders. Among the issues that these outsider-protagonists deal with is the forgetting or denial of their own roots. The novels I will analyse are Mikael Niemi's *Mannen som dog som en lax* (The Man Who Died as a Salmon, 2006) and the first novel in the series "Kautokeino" by Lars Pettersson: *Kautokeino, en blodig kniv* (Kautokeino, A Bloody Knife, 2012). In the narratives, the conflicts between the minority groups and the majority group and the conflicts among the members of the minority groups are dealt with and provide the context in which the crimes take place. Other conflicts that reflect in-betweenness relate to identity, language, and gender. Being able or unable to communicate in the minority language is one of the identity markers of the protagonists who struggle with their in-between identity. The paper thus addresses the question of choosing sides and deals with hybrid and/or fragmented identities and seeks to investigate if and how cultural demarcations are reflected in the narratives of Niemi and Pettersson. I will draw on studies on ethnolinguistic nationalism and postcolonialism from minority and gender perspectives as a theoretical framework in this paper.

**Keywords**

Crime fiction, gender, in-betweenness, minority languages, ethnolinguistic nationalism, Sámi, Meänkieli

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In the "Nordic noir" crime series *Midnight Sun* (2016), a French female detective, who is also of Berber-Algerian descent, is sent to northern Sweden to investigate the brutal murder of a Frenchman. There, she has to collaborate with a Swedish inspector whose mother is Sámi. The French detective is an outsider, a stranger, and has to deal with the rules and perspectives on law and order of the Sámi, the only indigenous people living in Scandinavia. However, the Swedish inspector himself is also an outsider because he is gay. In the series, homosexuality appears to be a problematic sexual identity in Sámi society.

Being the Other, an outsider, and a stranger, as well as the sense of in-betweenness that often goes along with these roles, are well-rehearsed topics in literature. Recently, discussion of the in-between position of the Sámi, or the Tornedalians, the Meänkieli-speaking minority in northern Sweden, has reached more popular genres, such as crime fiction and youth literature. A fine example within the genre of youth literature are the novels by Ann-Hélen Laestadius about Agnes, a girl with a Sámi mother and a Swedish father, seeking her roots and feeling torn between two cultures (Heith, 2011).

In this paper, I will focus on two crime novels with characters representing two perspectives, as depicted in *Midnight Sun*: one protagonist coming from the outside, confronted by life in the North, and protagonists from within the minority community. The protagonist from the outside can also be a person who has forgotten or denies their roots. The novels I will analyse are Mikael Niemi's *Mannen som dog som en lax* (The Man Who Died as a Salmon, 2006) and the first novel in the series "Kautokeino" by Lars Pettersson: *Kautokeino, en blodig kniv* (Kautokeino, A Bloody Knife, 2012).[1] In Mikael Niemi's *The Man Who Died as a Salmon*, a man was killed because of his cruel suppression of the Meänkieli-speaking people, and in order to avenge the fact that he took a child from its mother. But, this article is not about plots, mysteries, psychopathic murders, and the outcome of a whodunit, rather its focus is on female protagonists investigating murders set within minority communities and the conflict between the official state laws and the old and traditional laws of the minority communities the investigators have to deal with. The murders in *The Man Who Died as a Salmon* and in *Kautokeino, a Bloody Knife*, a novel situated in a Sámi context, are solved, but it is not clear whether the perpetrators will be charged or even punished. The success of the investigations is also often linked to whether the protagonist belongs to the community and has sufficient language skills in the minority language. Furthermore, the murderers are relatives of the investigating female main characters.

Regarding the authors, Niemi himself belongs to the Torne Valley community, whereas Pettersson does not belong to the Sámi. Pettersson worked as a moviemaker and lived in the North for more than twenty years. He lives in Sweden and spends the winter months in Kautokeino in Norway, where he became interested in the lives of the Sámi (Koivisto, 2014).

1 Neither novel is translated into English. All translations from Swedish are mine.





## Ethnic and Linguistic Minorities

The Sámi people and the Torne Valley people or Tornedalians are historical, ethnic, and territorial minorities (Broomans, 2015, p. 24). This describes communities who have lived in an area for a long time, have ethnic ties, as well as the three important characteristics that Miroslav Hroch lists in his conception of a nation: a "memory of a common past", "linguistic or cultural ties", and "a conception of the equality of all members of the group" (Hroch, 1985, p. 79). The origin of the Sámi is uncertain and still under discussion (Stroud, n.d.). According to Helge Salvesen, "no-one today can say with certainty where they came from or at what time after the last Ice Age they arrived in the area" (Salvesen, 1995, p. 106). The Sámi reindeer-herding group are regarded as semi-nomads.

The Torne Valley people migrated gradually from Southern and South-Eastern Finland to the North. Much is unclear regarding this emigration, and Einar Niemi echoes Salvesen: "How this migration and settlement came about in the early Middle Ages is still unclear and subject to controversy" (Niemi, 1995, p. 145). Before settlement, both groups underwent phases of migration and nomadism. Éduard Glissant differentiates between circular and invading nomadism. Arrow-like nomadism is a subcategory of aggressive invading nomadism. For example, a community gradually settles in a new area and is no longer a nomadic group (Glissant, 1997, p. 12). This also applies to the Sámi and the Tornedalians. Yet, it is important to distinguish between minority and migrant literature, Satu Gröndahl argued in the pioneering book *Litteraturens gränsland. Invandrar- och minoritetslitteratur i nordiskt perspektiv* (Borderland of Literature. Immigrant and Minority Literature in a Nordic Perspective, Gröndahl, 2002, p. 13), which researched minorities and migrants in Scandinavia. The term migrant literature is used for communities that recently left their homelands. It is possible (or probable) that the ensuing generations will then develop different memories and images of the homeland (see Runblom, 2000, p. 17). In the long run, the memories and images of the old homeland can even evolve into myths, stories, and songs.

In this paper, I will thus define the Sámi and the Tornedalians as minorities. The area in which the Sámi live, Sápmi, is situated in Northern Scandinavia (Norway, Sweden, and Finland) and the Kola Peninsula. The Tornedalians live in the Torne Valley, which received its name after the Torne river was designated as the border between Finland and Sweden in 1810 after Sweden lost the war against Russia (Gröndahl, 2002, p. 41). The Swedish government recognises the Sámi language and Meänkieli, a Finnish variant spoken by the Tornedalians, as two of the five official minority languages in Sweden. The Torne Valley is a multilingual area, where Finnish, Meänkieli, Sámi, and Swedish are spoken. Various languages are also spoken in Sápmi and used concurrently. Previously, both the Sámi and the Tornedalians had been subjected to language politics and other oppressive measures by the Finnish, Norwegian, and Swedish states. The ethnic revival started among the Sámi in the 1950s and 1960s (Fishman et al. eds., 2010, p. 256), and the Sámi- and Tornedalian

Meänkieli-speaking minorities started to propagate their cultures particularly after the 1970s (Fishman et al eds., 2011, p. 311).

Hroch has formulated three phases in the development of small nations based on his analysis of such nations in the nineteenth century (Hroch, 1985, p. 23). Both the Sámi and the Tornedalians have reached the first two phases. Phase A is one in which scholars, writers, and artists discover or rediscover their own culture and literature and aim to propagate literature, language, and cultural expressions. Phase B marks the foundation of publishing houses and societies to promote the propagation of the community culture; but phase C, which sees the working class join the pursuit of autonomy or an independent state, has not been reached.

A number of scholars in the field of nationalism studies have identified language, ethnicity, and space as important factors in nation building and merged them into one single concept, ethnolinguistic nationalism. From the perspective of ethnolinguistic nationalism, a nation is a community that is based on common ethnic ties, one language and territory. Maarten Van Ginderachter has criticised the concept of ethnolinguistic nationalism, but also tried to find a functional definition. Van Ginderachter discusses Smith's descriptions of "ethnie" and the concept of "mythomoteur". A mythomoteur includes three kinds of myths: an ethno-history of the group's memories of a common and glorious past; an "ancestral homeland", the territory where the ancestors have lived for ages and where historical events took place; and an "ethnic election", which refers to the desire of a people to become part of the history of nations. According to Van Ginderachter, there is a risk in focusing too much on ethnic markers. The concept of the inclusive civic state into which various groups can be included in the range from "the ethnic and the civic pole" should also be considered (Van Ginderachter, 2008, p. 13). Nevertheless, Van Ginderachter regards the concept of ethnolinguistic nationalism as "valuable as an analytic tool describing an intermediary stage somewhere between the ideal ethnic-civic poles" (Van Ginderachter, 2008, p. 13).

Ethnolinguistic nationalism was previously considered a nineteenth-century phenomenon. As I will demonstrate in this article, echoes of this nineteenth-century movement are reflected in contemporary fictional texts about minorities and can be described as a modern form of ethnolinguistic nationalism and a reaction to colonialism. In order to make this argument, I will also use selected concepts from postcolonialism, especially the term "cultural hybridity" introduced by Homi K. Bhabha in his study *The Location of Culture* (1994). Bhabha positions cultural hybridity in a space of in-betweenness, a "third space". It enables the individual to choose a self and accept cultural differences: "This interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 4). Bhabha points out the possibility of breaking through and going beyond the borders of a dominant and/or subordinate position. Though this "third space" originates in colonial or postcolonial positions, it "may open the way to conceptualizing an international culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism





or the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 38). In my opinion, this approach could transform the question of "whose side are you on" into a position of belonging to both sides or even to no side at all. Thus, the concept "cultural hybridity" could also be interpreted as a space with the possibility of reaching out to the other and of crossing cultural borders.

It is precisely this point that Bhabha makes in his introduction: "These in-between spaces provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood – singular or communal – that initiate new signs of identity and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation in the act of defining the idea of society itself" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 1). With this declaration at the beginning of the book, Bhabha intends to make space for experiments with different kinds of identities acting as individuals or acting in a collective, in a personal sphere or in the (political) public space.

In his study, Bhabha analyses novels by authors including Toni Morrison and Nadine Gordimer. The women in the novels represent ambivalence and "the home as the space where the personal and political merge" (Benstock et al., 2002, p. 201). According to Benstock et al., who adapt and apply the notion of "cultural hybridity" to gender, Bhabha "combines feminist and postcolonial criticism in his persistent focus on the 'in-between'" (Benstock et al., 2002, p. 201). Postcolonial literature as well as feminist literature can be regarded as resistance literature according to Benstock et al., and instead of thinking in opposites, they endorse the approach offered by Bhabha. Postcolonial texts do not only function in oppositional models but include an ambivalence and could be interpreted in a more dynamic way, by approaching these as "in-between" discourses. In this paper I will apply Bhabha's term "in-betweenness" to the female protagonists who moved from their urban bubble into the wasteland to investigate murders and who at first felt as an outsider.

The gender perspective on postcolonialism will be combined with the concept of ethnolinguistic nationalism. Another theoretical approach – originally developed on the basis of earlier material and circumstances that can be used to approach contemporary minority literature – builds on the three characteristics of minor literature formulated by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1986) in their study of Franz Kafka (see Broomans, 2015, p. 26).[2] The first is that language is influenced by deterritorialization, the second is that the individual is connected to politics, and the third is the collective value of minor literature. According to Deleuze and Guattari, minor literature is dependent on the collective statement (Deleuze & Guattari, 1986, pp. 16-17). Authors have to find their own underdeveloped nation or as Deleuze and Guattari call it, the own "patois" and "own third world" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1986, p. 18). After assimilation or mimicry[3] and the loss of the territory (deterritorialization), the next step is revolution and, finally, a phase of decoloni-

2 Deleuze and Guattari use minor literature as opposite to the major literature. I prefer to use the term "minority".

3 Mimicry is a term that is frequently used in postcolonial studies to describe how the colonised imitates the coloniser.

zation and reterritorialization of language (reshaping) can occur. Deterritorialization appears to be the opposite of what is regarded as ideal from the perspective of ethnolinguistic nationalism, that culture, language, and territory should be linked. Deterritorialization symbolises the loss of the homeland but can also symbolise the embrace of a global culture.

In my analysis of the two crime novels I will demonstrate that some of the characteristics Deleuze and Guattari described are applicable to these texts. Crime novels and minorities might at first glance perhaps not be the most obvious combination. However, against the backdrop of the framework Deleuze and Guattari offered, the two crime novels could be read as a strategic action manifesto. They are closely connected to the individual, politics, the lost language, identity, and the minority collective.

In Niemi's novel, the crime is committed in the Torne valley in Northern Sweden, in Pajala. Pajala is now well-known because of Niemi's novel *Populärmusik från Vittula* (Popular Music from Vittula), published in 2000. In this novel, his international breakthrough, Niemi recounts a little boy's coming of age amid his village's entry into modernity. Religious issues such as laestadianism,[4] alcohol and drug abuse, and language struggles between Swedish, Finnish, and Meänkieli are dealt with humorously. This also comes to the fore in *The Man Who Died as a Salmon*. A major difference is that the protagonist in *Popular Music from Vittula* and many of his friends leave the village, whereas in *The Man Who Died as a Salmon*, the protagonist, Therese Fossnes, enters the village to assist the local cops in solving the murder. Therese Fossnes is from the capital, Stockholm, in central Sweden, and is confronted with a patriarchal society that wants to protect the local culture and its own language, Meänkieli. Pettersson's novel *Kautokeino, a Bloody Knife*, also features a female protagonist, Anna Magnusson, who lives and works in Stockholm as a public prosecutor. Her Sámi grandmother asks her to defend a cousin who is accused of rape. Anna travels to the Norwegian part of Sápmi, to the Finnmark area.

Both Therese Fossnes and Anna Magnusson have roots they are not aware of or do not want to consider. Therese has roots in the Torne Valley and Anna's mother was of Sámi origin. Their in-betweenness is something they are gradually confronted with during the criminal investigations. Furthermore, both female protagonists are on their way from an urban environment to what they experience as the desolate North, and are confronted with other codes and laws.

4 Laestadianism is a revivalist movement of the National Swedish Lutheran Church that started in Northern Sweden (Lapland) initiated by Lars Levi Laestadius (1800–1861).





## Language Borders and Family Ties

When Therese Fossnes travels by plane from Stockholm to Pajala via Luleå and sees all the forests beneath her, she defines herself as an urban person. Another thing that strikes her as the plane descends is that she cannot understand the other passengers because they are talking in another language, Finnish. Once in Pajala, she starts investigating the murder of Martin Udde, a retired customs official. Therese has to collaborate with police officers who often make her aware that she is an outsider, because she cannot understand Finnish.

Accompanied by police officers Sonny Rantatalo and Eino Svedberg, she starts the hunt for the murderer by interviewing the people who knew Martin Udde. Many of them are Meänkieli-speaking Tornedalians. The use and status of the language, as well as language as an identity marker, are discussed throughout the novel. Sonny Rantatalo explains to Therese that many people from the Torne Valley Swedify their Finnish surnames, perhaps because they feel ashamed (Niemi, 2006, p. 35). A woman whom Therese meets during the investigation also speaks Finnish, but she explains to Therese that it is in fact Meänkieli, the variant of the Finnish language spoken in the Torne Valley. The father of Eino Svedberg also has to be interviewed, but he only wants to communicate in Finnish, even though he is a Swedish citizen. Meänkieli is the language of his ancestors and the language of the hearth. For the father of Svedberg, the use of Meänkieli is an act of resistance. These perspectives on Meänkieli connected with the territory of the Torne Valley, could be interpreted as reminiscent of ethnolinguistic nationalism. For the people who want to hold on to Meänkieli, the language is connected with a common history (the ancestors), identity (the hearth), and the territory (Torne Valley).

It turns out that many people hated Martin Udde because he actively campaigned against the use of Meänkieli and was furious when the plan to introduce Meänkieli in schools – to allow young people to learn the language of their grandparents – was realised. "Martin did not like Torne Valley Finnish. That is to say, *our* meänkieli" (Niemi, 2006, p. 73; emphasis added).[5] Udde loathed the decision of the Swedish government to recognise Meänkieli as one of the five official minority languages in Sweden. Udde regarded Meänkieli as a fake language and regarded members of the association as fanatics for promoting the language, not as genuine people from the Torne Valley (Niemi, 2006, p. 127).[6]

It was common knowledge that people threatened Udde because he had mistreated their parents and grandparents while working as a customs official. One of those threatening him was Esaias Vanhakoski, whom Therese arrests. She interviews him with the assistance of an interpreter because he refuses to speak Swedish. However, when she accidently says some words in Finnish, he begins to speak in Swedish with her, and it later turns out that Esaias was innocent. Esaias confirms

5 "Martin gillade ju inte tornedalsfinskan. Alltså våran meänkieli".

6 Svenska Tornedalingars Riksförbund, The Swedish Torne Valley Peoples' National Association, founded in 1981.

that Martin Udde hated Meänkieli, and that as a member of the Child Welfare Council he even humiliated poor families. Esaias and Therese take different positions towards Meänkieli. Therese feels that people who live in Sweden should not have to learn Meänkieli in school. She regards the Meänkieli language as a Stone Age language (Niemi, 2006, p. 87), and feels isolated, understanding neither the conduct of the people in the Torne Valley nor the importance of family feuds. In her conversations with Esaias, with whom Therese begins a relationship, the subject of what Meänkieli means for its speakers frequently pops up. They discuss what it means not to be able to speak Meänkieli, as well as the importance of belonging to the Torne Valley community. Therese does not understand why people who are Swedish and live in Sweden would want to speak Meänkieli. Esaias belongs to the first generation of the Torne valley people who are trying to achieve cultural autonomy and is convinced they should be able to speak their own language. Therefore, he replies: "One wants to be complete" (Niemi, 2006, p. 124).[7] Therese responds that she is already complete because she regards herself as a cosmopolitan. She positions herself in the space of deterritorialization and as part of the global culture.

When Therese investigates old newspapers, she comes across letters to the editor by Martin Udde and by readers who defend the Meänkieli language, and she begins to read more about the topic. The narrator provides a lot of information about Meänkieli in this part of the novel (Niemi, 2006, pp. 128-131). For the most part, the story is told from Therese's perspective, but in some parts of the novel, the narrator's perspective shifts to Esaias'. These parts adopt in my view an informative narrator's voice. For example, when Esaias reflects on the Tornedalians' migration to the Torne valley, he shows they were not the first to arrive, as the land was already inhabited by a distantly related people (the Sámi) who called themselves the "*sámit*" (people) (Niemi, 2006, p. 136). The shift in the narrator's perspective from a female to a male protagonist when history and politics are discussed is remarkable and could be regarded as gender bias. The female character, Therese, is apparently not attributed historical knowledge and has become speechless. Her opinions about the use of Meänkieli seem of less importance and are neutralized.

In addition to the parts of the novel where the story is told from Esaias' point of view, there is also an omniscient narrator, whom we could identify as male, who reflects frequently on the language situation in Torne Valley and weaves in language politics and the history of the Torne Valley (Niemi, 2006, pp. 180-181; pp. 191-192; pp. 205-214; pp. 266-271). The whole of Chapter 32 (Niemi, 2006, pp. 205-214) is about the Swedish-Russian war, which resulted in Sweden losing Finland to Russia and a border being drawn between the two. There are thus three narrator perspectives: Therese, Esaias, and a third narrator.

A generation gap becomes apparent in one of the parts narrated by Esaias. As a child, Esaias wished to speak Meänkieli, but his mother had internalised the view that Meänkieli was a backward language, and thus always spoke Swedish with him

7 "Man vill bli hel".



(Niemi, 2006, p. 149). Here, the mother displays signs of internal colonisation or mimicry. Sweden colonised minorities such as the Sámi and the Tornedalians living within the borders of the Swedish state. Mimicry is, in my view, a more personal reaction to colonialism. Esaias' mother adapted to the dominant culture and wanted to be part of it. But, if parents stopped speaking Meänkieli with their children, the language would disappear. This is one of Esaias' reflections in the novel (Niemi, 2006, p. 152). In their dialogue, Esaias' mother tells him about Martin Udde's practice in the classroom as a teacher, before he became a customs official, which was very cruel.

The intergenerational transmission of language is also interrupted in the family of the murdered Martin Udde. Udde's nephew, Jan Evert Herdepalm, who went for the first time to the Torne Valley, discovers that the old family name had been Niemi, but that his mother, Alice, had never spoken Meänkieli with him. Jan Evert wonders if people from the Torne Valley became "real Swedes" on moving South (Niemi, 2006, p. 176). At the end of the novel, Jan Evert Herdepalm asks his mother why she never taught him Meänkieli: "I would have been the only half-Negro able to speak Meänkieli" (Niemi, 2006, p. 316).[8] His father came from Africa and his mother tongue was Ndebele. Herdepalm is, like Therese, an outsider who is deprived of his native language on his mother's side.

Family relationships are very important within the Torne Valley community, as Therese finds out when she converses with a woman on the plane back to Stockholm. The woman is from Pajala and asks Therese whose daughter she is. Therese responds that she is her own daughter and notices that this was the wrong answer. It is not possible to be an individual - one must always be connected to family. Therese regrets that she never knew her grandmother. Her mother was given up for adoption and hated her biological mother (Niemi, 2006, p. 233). She always denied the grandmother's existence. Therese found her anyway, in a home for the elderly (Niemi, 2006, p. 133), thus finding her biological roots.

When Esaias travels to Stockholm, he accompanies Therese on a visit to her grandmother in the home for the elderly. Esaias spots photographs of a cottage in the Torne Valley he recognises. While talking to her, he notices that the grandmother speaks Meänkieli. He says nothing of this to Therese, nor are the readers told anything by the omniscient narrator at that point in the story.

In addition to language politics and her broken family ties, Therese is also confronted by nature in the North. She often jogs to keep fit and reflects on the landscape. At first, she regarded the landscape of the North as a bleak wasteland, but she comes to realise that there is something about it which gets inside the human psyche: "It does not leave one in peace" (Niemi, 2006, p. 33).[9] She even uses the metaphor of flying and longing to reach the sun and blue heavens. It could be read as a hidden intertextual reference to the novel by Selma Lagerlöf, *Nils Holgerssons underbara*

8 "Jag skulle varit den ende halvnegern som kunnat meänkieli".

9 "Det lämnar en inte ifred".

*resa genom Sverige* (Nils Holgersson's Wonderful Journey across Sweden, 1906-7). This novel was meant to educate the schoolchildren in Sweden about the geography of Sweden. Nils was transformed into a little goblin and traveled Sweden on the back of the goose Mårten and learned a lot about Sweden and its geography. During his in-between experience he adopts a more respectful attitude towards animals and the goblins. In this nature Therese feels liberated, without a fatherland, without an umbilical cord: "This is beauty" (Niemi, 2006, p. 117).[10] Therese leaves her urban environment, but retains her sense of belonging in the world and remains in the deterritorialized space.

At the end of the novel, events advance rapidly. Therese surprises Esaias when she speaks some words in Meänkieli and tells him that she started a Finnish language course and will move to Pajala to serve in the police force there (Niemi, 2006, p. 329). The murder is not yet solved, however. In the last chapter, while Easias and Therese are asleep, a shadow enters their bedroom. Esaias manages to grab a hold of the intruder, who turns out to be Therese's mother. Esaias addresses her as "Helena Fossnes. Or rather Forsnäs, translated from [the Finnish] Koskenniemi" (Niemi, 2006, p. 334).[11] Though Helena says that she only had her insulin with her, it is suggested in the text that she was about to kill Esaias by injecting him with poison while he slept. She confesses that she murdered Martin Udde because he took her from her mother as a little child and put her in a foster home. Moreover, because Udde called her mother a whore, she took his tongue when she murdered him. Esaias states after Helena's confession that Therese's grandmother is his grandmother's sister and that he and Therese are related. Helena asks him if he will tell Therese that she murdered Martin Udde, and that Therese is in fact from the Torne Valley. Esaias does not answer. The mother waits but receives no response. When Esaias hears her leave the room, he hears the river and he thinks: "The river should tell" (Niemi, 2006, p. 336).[12]

To conclude, at the end of the novel the reader is told who murdered Martin Udde, and that Therese unwittingly found her roots. The reader has to fill in the gap and decide whether Esaias' knowledge has consequences, whether he will inform the police and Therese. Therese is left in an ambivalent and unknown space, an in-betweenness that is as fluid and changeable as the river Esaias hears. It symbolises also the language border between the Meänkieli speaking Tornedalians, the Finns at the other side of the river, as well as between those who can and cannot speak Meänkieli.

The underlying story of this novel is the revenge of a woman on a man who made improper use of his authority and power. It shows that the ties between the grandmother, the mother (Helena) and the daughter (Therese) are strong and as transparent as the amniotic fluid that encloses the child in the womb of the mother.

10 "Det var skönhet".

11 "Helena Fossnes. Eller snarare Forsnäs, försvenskat från Koskenniemi."

12 "Älven får berätta".



## Language Borders and Ethnicity

The crime novel *Kautokeino, a Bloody Knife* by Lars Pettersson, is situated in Sápmi, more specifically in Finnmark in Northern Norway. The events also occur in Sweden, including in the surroundings of Pajala. The main character is Anna Magnusson, a public prosecutor. In contrast to Therese, she is aware of the fact that her late mother was a Sámi by birth. Her mother left her family and her role as a reindeer herder, moved to Stockholm and married a Swedish man. Anna's grandmother asks Anna to leave Stockholm and help the family defend a cousin, Nils Mattis, who has been accused of rape. Anna travels to Norrland and takes time off to help her cousin.

The novel opens with a short chapter in which a third-person narrator describes a man in a pub listening to a *joik*, a traditional Sámi song, and experiencing a sense of fellowship whereas previously he had always regarded the *joik* as something for tourists. The following chapter is presented as a first-person narrative: here Anna is thinking about her mother, who died young and who never spoke about her life in Norrland, which she left when she was 23 years old. In the first chapter from Anna's perspective, she poses the first question about her mother's roots: why did her mother want to forget everything of her life before she migrated from Sápmi to Stockholm (Pettersson, 2012, p. 12)?

After Anna arrives, she observes that she does not remember many Sámi words. When clarifying her role in the case of Nils Mattis to the police officer Jon Arne Kristiansen, she confesses that she speaks very little Sámi, only some swearwords and common expressions (Pettersson, 2012, p. 29). This issue of being excluded or ignored because Anna does not speak Sámi recurs throughout the novel. It expresses the in-betweenness Anna feels, for instance, when people speak Sámi in her presence: "The exclusion upset me" (Pettersson, 2012, p. 108).[13] Various attitudes towards the Sámi language are expressed, not only among Swedes, but also among the Sámi themselves. When Anna meets Ante Mikkel Eira, her grandmother's lawyer, he states that lawyers who speak Sámi can get work quite easily in Sápmi. Anna tells him that she cannot speak Sámi, only a little. He responds that he is not the language police, that she should try, and not be afraid to make mistakes (Pettersson, 2012, p. 247). Anna also often has difficulties understanding the code of conduct (Pettersson, 2012, p. 159). This reflects a strict ethnolinguistic nationalism of a small group within the Sámi minority, with its own codes and with a language that excludes those who do not speak it.

Anna and Kristiansen start a relationship, and he explains to her that the investigation is complicated by the fact that the state laws are not the same as the laws the people in Sápmi follow. This is one of the main topics of the novel. It reminds the readers that the Sámi are a colonised people, some of whom, in response to colonisation, as a form of resistance, wish to maintain their own rules. The Sámi who remained in their territory did not become deterritorialized, but isolated as an exotic

13 "Utanförskapet gjorde mig upprörd".

indigenous people. According to Swedish policy in the nineteenth century, they were to remain Sámi ("Lapp-skall-vara-Lapp"),[14] because they would not survive in the civilised world. Anna takes the view that Norwegian law, and not the old traditions, should also be applied in Finnmark. She often discusses this with the police officers she has to collaborate with in Finnmark – Inge Amundsen, Kristiansen, and the superintendent Eliassen. Later, after Anna has lived in Finnmark for a while, she starts reflecting on the system of law and moral issues, such as right and wrong. Is it possible to apply state law to the Sámi society in which the point of departure for law is dependent on social cohesion (the family and the *siida*)[15] and a shared historical experience (Pettersson, 2012, p. 183)?

The longer she stays in Finnmark, the more Anna remembers her youth and the stories her mother told her about when she was a child and lived in Sundbyberg, a suburb of Stockholm. Stories her mother told about nature and the wind, animals and human beings, stories that never ended and played out without a plot. Other topics in the novel are the obligation Anna feels to help the family and to take her mother's place in the family, the essence of being Sámi, as well as family ties and the meaning of belonging to a *siida* (Pettersson, 2012, p. 139). Every *siida* has reindeer and Anna's mother owned reindeer too. Sometimes, members of other families steal reindeer and Anna is confronted with a complex crime that she needs to resolve with the family that steals from hers, without involving the police (Pettersson, 2012, p. 144). On these occasions, Anna notices that it is important for Sámi to know to which family she belongs. Her mother's sister, Sara Marit, plays an important role. She regards Anna's mother as a traitor because she left the family and the reindeer herding (Pettersson, 2012, p. 47).

Another division among the Sámi people is between those who work with reindeer – working in various areas in Sápmi – and those who travel the world to lecture about the traditions and cultures of the Sámi people. Anna reflects on this and calls those who represent the "indigenous people" "överklassamer" (upper-class Sámi) (Pettersson, 2012, p. 308). Anna believes that the men who work with the reindeer in the mountains are the true bearers of the Sámi culture. How many of the upper-class Sámi have experience of working in the harsh conditions in the mountains of the interior? On the other hand, so Anna asks herself, does a minority not have the right to create and maintain a positive self-image (Pettersson, 2012, p. 308)?

As in Niemi's novel, political events in Sámi history are reported and reflected on. Though most of the book is narrated from Anna's perspective, these parts are taken over by a third-person narrator who conveys Anna's reflections. For example, the protest at the Alta river in 1981 against the hydroelectric power plant – Norway's "*Wounded knee*" (Pettersson, 2012, p. 93) – is discussed. The Sámi lost the fight but the Norwegian state ratified the International Labor Organization convention about

14 The slogan "Lapp-skall-vara-Lapp" refers to the Swedish policy of segregation. The Sámi should remain nomads and reindeer-herding people. This is also expressed in the movie *Sami Blood* (2016, by the director Amanda Kernell). See for example: http://www.samer.se/4095.

15 A *siida* is a community of reindeer-herding families in a *siida* territory.



the rights of indigenous people in 1990. The Sámi in Norway were allowed to found a "Sametinget" (a Sámi parliament), a Sámi national theatre, and a Sámi-speaking college. Another historical event was the Kautokeino rebellion in 1852. References are made in the novel to the racial doctrine, with the description of the skull of one of the executed revolutionaries being returned after 150 years, during which it had been the subject of racial biology research (Pettersson, 2012, p. 181).[16]

The girl who was raped by Nils Mattis, Karen Margrethe, did not press charges, although Anna convinced her to do so. Anna has an ambivalent attitude towards the expectations of her family and her opinion that the sexual harassment of women is a problem in the Sámi community. Karen Margrethe is then found dead and she was not the first to have died under suspicious circumstances or be killed during Anna's search for the truth. According to the Sámi, the girl was a *rivgu*, non-Sámi. A non-Sámi man, such as Anna's father, is called *daza*. In Finnmark, Sámi men are respectful towards Sámi women, but Anna learns that they behave differently and with less respect towards *rivgus* (Pettersson, 2012, p. 62). Once again this reflects the fact that there are also conflicts amongst the different minority groups because Karen Margrethe told Anna that her family actually belonged to the Sea Sámi (Pettersson, 2012, p. 67). The different attitude towards Karen Margrethe is gender-related. She was denied her dignity as a woman and her ethnic belonging to the Sámi community. She was not permitted to enter a stage of cultural hybridity and combine two worlds. She is a victim of an imposed hierarchy within the Sámi community.

During the investigation Anna makes the acquaintance of her other relatives and people from other families, such as Ailie, the half-sister of Vidar, the next person to be killed and the man who witnessed the rape. He is the character who was listening to a *joik* in the first chapter of the novel. Ailie turns out to be Vidar's natural sister but he was taken away as a boy and was fostered in Oslo and was meant to assimilate. In Norway at that time Sámi children were taken away from their parents to become real Norwegian citizens (Pettersson, 2012, p. 185). As in the novel *The Man Who Died as a Salmon*, people from the Sámi minority had changed their Sámi names to Norwegian or Swedish names (Pettersson, 2012, p. 197), and like the Tornedalians' in that novel, their decision can be regarded as mimicry.

In the novel, the position of Sámi men is often discussed. Many women migrate to the South to work in the big cities. According to Anna's grandfather, the lonely men who stay behind in the hills get the feeling that they are invincible (Pettersson, 2012, p. 268). During the conversation, Anna's grandfather gives Anna her mother's Sámi clothes (Pettersson, 2012, p. 269). Anna, finding herself caught between state law and the Sámi traditions, does not belong entirely to the Sámi community and gradually tries to fit in, for example in a confrontation in a pub with an old friend of her mother's, who calls her a *rivgu*. Anna gets angry and starts to swear in Sámi (Pettersson, 2012, p. 293).

16 Racial biology is also depicted in the aforementioned movie *Sami Blood*.

During her investigation, Anna gets help from Issat Levi, the postman, to understand how some policemen, among others Eliassen and Josef Ante, work in Sápmi. His father had recorded all the rape cases which were not followed up on (Pettersson, 2012, p. 316). Events are complicated when the man who had told her about the theft of her family's reindeer is murdered, and also by Ailie's confession, when she tells Anna that she hated her brother Vidar. Did she kill Vidar? When Anna finds a needle case on the spot where Vidar was killed, she discovers that this belongs to Sara Marit. Sara Marit confesses to the murder and during the conversation Anna discovers that Karen Margrethe was murdered by Vidar, because he wanted to prevent her from going to the police. She also learns that Vidar was taken to jail to serve a sentence instead of Nils Mattis and that he got money as compensation. Vidar wanted more money and threatened to tell the police that he saw Nils Mattis with the girl. Sara Marit was afraid that if Nils Mattis was sent to jail, no one would take care of the reindeer (Pettersson, 2012, pp. 329–331). Anna decides that she will not expose Sara Marit, but will take her mother's place in the family and *siida* with the needle case as security (Pettersson, 2012, p. 333). Why Anna takes this decision is not explained by the narrator, but a possible interpretation could be that she keeps the needle case in case Sara Marit would obstruct Anna's taking over the place of her mother in the family. Furthermore, she decides to challenge Eliassen and Ante and gathers the evidence she received from Issat Levi. At the same time, she is in doubt: does she have the right to make complaints against people in a system she does not understand the codes of (Pettersson, 2012, pp. 334–335)? It is remarkable that Anna seems to give preference to the family and the collective. The result could be that the rape of Karen Margrethe will not be punished. For that matter Anna demonstrates an ambivalent attitude towards sexual harassment. But this could be interpreted as a gender bias of the narrator for whom the well-being of the collective is more important than individual female suffering.

The novel ends with Anna traveling back to Stockholm, but she feels that she will leave Kautokeino only for a short time, perceiving her departure as rounding off something that was the start of something new. She also reflects on the role of her mother in the family and that she is now in a position to rehabilitate her mother and take her place (Pettersson, 2012, p. 339). Before going to Kiruna airport, she wonders if she should put on her mother's smock. Everybody would stare at her, but she decides to let them stare (Pettersson, 2012, p. 340). Anna accepts her mother's roots, which are in fact also her own. She decides to leave her urban professional identity and pursues belonging to her mother's family.

Anna's state of in-betweenness develops gradually in the novel. She evolves from being a total outsider to someone trying to become part of and included by the Sámi family, to learning the language and starting to doubt whether or not the official state law is applicable in Sámi society. The extent to which it will be possible to balance the global world Anna came from and her place in the new family, and to prevent this from becoming a new in-betweenness, is a question which remains unanswered.





## Two Positions of In-Betweenness

Both murders are solved, but the stories do not end with the punishment of the murderers, both of whom are relatives – a mother and an aunt – of the female main characters who are also the investigators. The circumstances of the murders can be positioned against the backdrop of language politics: the oppression of a minority language is described on the one hand, and a modern ethnolinguistic nationalism is proposed by the omniscient narrators on the other.

Both female protagonists fall in love with men who become their helpers and who act as the male protagonist. Esaias belongs to the Meänkieli-speaking community and develops from being a suspect to Therese's helper and saviour. Kristiansen helps and supports Anna too, but he does not belong to the Sámi minority. Moreover, in that story there is an unresolved conflict between the official state law and the old traditional Sámi rules.

A mother-daughter relationship plays an important role in both novels. Anna's mother, who died at an early age, left her family, migrated to the South, and married a Swede. In Anna's case, there is also a sense of guilt because her mother left the family. Therese's mother was placed in a foster family after having been taken away from her unmarried mother by Martin Udde, whom she murdered in revenge. The analysis demonstrates that Therese is left with her "cultural hybridity" identity. The narrator does not reveal whether Esaias will tell her about her mother. The gender perspective of my analysis revealed that there is a gender bias in the narrator's choice to allocate the communication of political and historical information to a male protagonist. In both novels there is one female protagonist, but besides the other male protagonist, an omniscient male narrator informs the reader of the history and language politics of the minority groups.

Both Anna and Therese choose sides, they left the urban, individually focused space and entered an unknown and desolate space in which the collective is more important than the individual.

Both protagonists feel an in-betweenness because they do not speak the minority language. Therese recognises the Tornedalians' struggle for linguistic survival and Anna chooses to regain the lost Sámi language. Anna is aware that she can choose between her old identity and a new Sámi identity. Whether Therese will have the same choice is not revealed.

The main difference between the two novels is that the reader is left without knowing whether Therese will learn the truth about the murder she investigated and her own Tornedalian ancestry. Anna, for her part, had forgotten her Sámi roots, but, ultimately, she accepts them.

Post-colonialism is linked to a modern variant of ethnolinguistic nationalism in the novel. Not only because the two female protagonists choose the side of the minority language, but also by the omniscient narrators who are informing the reader about the colonisation of the minority groups.

Anna develops from a person who came from the outside into a person who gradually becomes part of the Sámi minority and therefore has to make choices. Anna is surrounded by networks of women: her grandmother, her aunt Sara Marit, the murderess, and Ailie. Therese is surrounded by an invisible network of women: her mother who concealed her mother from her daughter on the one hand, but avenged her mother on the other. These women networks also reveal an ambivalence and an in-betweenness.

A concrete biological in-betweenness is the fact that Anna is a half-blood Sámi whereas Therese does not know much about her father. One of the other characters in the novel, Jan Evert Herdepalm, has a Swedish mother and an African father, and here the intergenerational language transmission of Meänkieli is also interrupted. In fact, intergenerational language transmission is disturbed in both novels. Anna's mother never taught her Sámi. Language plays various roles in the novels: it can be a symbol for cultural identity and belonging, and in the case of the Udde murder, a tool for revealing the murderer, because Esaias discovers the Meänkieli background of Therese and her mother Helena.

Another interesting similarity are the passages narrated in the third person in *The Man Who Died as a Salmon* and the passages in the first person related by an omniscient narrator in *Kautokeino, a Bloody Knife*. In these passages, information is conveyed about the history and language politics of the Meänkieli-speaking people and the Sámi. As demonstrated in the analyses of these novels, a modern form of ethnolinguistic nationalism comes to the fore and is advocated by the omniscient narrator.

The novels reflect to a certain extent the phases formulated by Hroch. The self-awareness of the minority groups, the Sámi and Meänkieli-speaking communities, is expressed particularly through language politics, the focus on traditions, and through emphasizing the differences between the communities' own laws and state law. Though in the two novels neither group is agitating for a state of its own, the novels demonstrate political resistance through a refusal to being bound by state law. Approached through the three characteristics of Deleuze and Guattari, the second and third can be applied to a certain extent: the main characters are connected to politics and the collective is more important than the individual, especially within the Sámi minority. The idea of language being influenced by deterritorialization might be important to Niemi but not to Pettersson, who defends the Sámi cause in his crime novels, but cannot be defined as a Sámi writer. This is an interesting literary historiographical case for scholars in this field, as well for scholars who work with minority and migrant writers. How should we define non-minority but minority-engaged writers like Pettersson? Are they writers in-between?

A final similarity between the two novels, already observed, is that they are written by male authors who choose female main characters and that a gender bias could be observed when a male voice takes over in the historical and political parts of the book. This gender bias also infects another side of the story about Therese and Anna, the subordination of a gendered perspective to a modern ethnolinguistic nationalism.





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